

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
Office of the Executive Director  
Interagency Advisory Group  
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Washington, D.C. 20415

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Minutes of the IAG Performance Appraisal Committee

November 28, 1978

Mrs. Mary Hansen, Acting Chief of the Policy Analysis and Development Division opened the initial meeting of this committee by briefly discussing the importance of performance appraisal in several major aspects of the Civil Service Reform Act and outlining the purposes of this committee. These are: 1) to obtain agency input for OPM policies; 2) to provide a forum in which agencies can have an informal exchange of information, progress, and ideas about improving the performance appraisal process; and 3) to give OPM a major source of information from agencies on their work in this area.

Dr. Charles Anderson, of the Personnel Research and Development Center and Mrs. Mary Sugar, of the Policy Analysis and Development Division, who co-chaired the remainder of the meeting, were introduced, along with Mrs. Priscilla Levinson of PADD. All three are working on implementation of the performance appraisal provisions of the Reform Act.

The following announcements were made about work in progress.

1. An FPM bulletin on the provisions of Subchapter I of Chapter 43, U.S. Code has been prepared and should be available soon. This will be distributed through the special process used for information on the Reform Act.
2. Part and FPM Chapter 430 are being drafted and will be made available to committee members as soon as possible. Draft regulations will go into effect on an interim basis on January 11, 1978, pending issuance of final regulations.
3. A proposed revised format for OPM regulations and FPM material has been distributed to Directors of Personnel for comment. The purpose of this revised format is to provide a clear distinction between requirements (regulation) and guidance (FPM chapter) and to provide material in a format which is easier to read and understand.



-2-

4. Information on the applicability of the Uniform Guidelines to performance appraisals is being cleared internally.
5. A basic bibliography on performance appraisal has been prepared.
6. The "Guide to Improving Performance Evaluation" is being revised to reflect changes resulting from the Reform Act. However, state-of-the-art information contained in the current edition is accurate and should still be useful to agencies.
7. Guidance on preparing contract proposals and monitoring contracts will be available after the first of the year.
8. A video tape on performance appraisal aspects of the Reform Act is being made. Specific information on its availability to agencies will be provided in a subsequent meeting.

As a preface to discussion of the first agenda item, continuation of a fixed appraisal period requirement, Mrs. Sugar stated that an OPM objective in carrying out one of the purposes of the Reform Act is to permit agencies the maximum leeway possible to establish their own systems, and that requirements not imposed by law will be added only where viewed as necessary. Under current regulations, performance ratings are required at least once a year. The Reform Act requires "periodic appraisals" but sets no exact time requirement. Principal points brought out in the discussion were:

- 1) The one year requirement has posed no operational problems except for specific occupational areas, such as research scientists.
- 2) An OPM requirement establishing a minimum appraisal period leaves anything shorter than the minimum period negotiable; no OPM requirement leaves the whole question negotiable.
- 3) Some representatives of agencies with large numbers of union contracts expressed concern over possibility of great variation in appraisal periods resulting from negotiation of contracts.
- 4) Unless OPM establishes some reasonable limits on lengths of appraisal periods, it is in a difficult position if an agency submits a plan with unjustifiably long periods.
- 5) In effect, the appraisal period for individuals covered by merit pay provisions is established at one year because of the need to base annual merit pay determinations on performance.

-3-

- 6) The procedure for removing or demoting an employee based on performance prohibits use of reasons more than one year old.

The three points of view resulting from the discussion were that OPM should continue to require annual appraisals, that it should leave the length of the period entirely up to the agencies, and that OPM should either establish a range of time or permit exceptions to a uniform requirement.

The second topic discussed concerns whether there should be a minimum period of service before a performance appraisal may be made. General agreement was that this should be left up to agencies.

The third topic discussed concerned performance while an employee is on detail. Points brought out included: 1) the need for both the agency and employee to have a record of performance, particularly of extended details; 2) the need for the information as a basis for merit pay decision; 3) the need to consider the length of the detail; and 4) that performance while on detail should not be used as a reason for removing the employee from the position to which permanently assigned. The general opinion of the members was that performance while on detail should be appraised and considered in an overall appraisal, providing that the detail is long enough to warrant a separate appraisal.